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## Why Proliferate? Russia and the Non-Nuclear Weapon Regime

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The United States and Russian Federation both agree that any further proliferation of nuclear weapons will undermine world security. However, adopting a common strategy to enforce non-proliferation has proven difficult, as Washington and Moscow have vastly different threat perceptions and approaches towards states with nuclear capabilities. Russia's agreement to provide nuclear fuel to Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant – a sore spot in U.S./Russian relations – underscores this difference.

This paper examines Moscow's point of view regarding nuclear proliferation by defining Russia's role as a nuclear proliferator and identifying several Russian reasons/justifications for its actions. Russia's political position on this matter illustrates several differences in US-Russian contemporary thought regarding nuclear technology transfers.

### Early History of Nuclear Nonproliferation (1940's to 1970)

Beginning roughly sixty years ago, nuclear technology proliferation became a major concern for the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union; i.e, the nations responsible for launching the nuclear age. Controlling access to nuclear technology would become one of the first issues on which the U.S. and Soviet Union would attempt to find common ground.

In the U.S. there were two competing schools of thought about nuclear proliferation. The "monopolists" believed that the possession of nuclear weapons technology provided a distinct strategic advantage, and that it should not be shared -- not even with NATO allies. The "managers" believed that nuclear weapon technology was a science, and like all sciences, its spread would be inevitable. Therefore, they wanted to use nuclear technology to build alliances and influence. The U.S. eventually settled on a modified "monopolist" view with the "Atoms for Peace" program, which assisted nations assembling civilian nuclear programs in exchange for promising not to develop a military nuclear capability.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Walsh, "Russian and American Nonproliferation Policy: Success, Failure, and the Role of Cooperation," June 2004.

"Atoms for Peace" was the title of a speech delivered by Dwight D. Eisenhower to the UN General Assembly in New York City on December 8, 1953. The speech launched the idea of assisting other nations to develop peaceful nuclear technologies in exchange for not developing nuclear technology for military purposes.

The Soviets initially favored the “manager” approach. They provided significant help to The People’s Republic of China (PRC) in developing its nuclear research program, but did not directly transfer the weapon technology. Later, after relations between the two nations soured, the Soviets realized that assisting a country not under its control or even influence with a large scale nuclear program was not good security policy. The Soviet Union reached many of the same conclusions as the U.S. when balancing the costs vs. benefits of proliferating nuclear technology, and eventually adopted a similar “Atoms for Peace” type program<sup>2</sup>

#### Formalizing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime (1970-1991)

While the United States and the Soviet Union were debating their roles as purveyors of nuclear technology, several nations were independently developing their nuclear weapons capability. France and China’s independent emergence as nuclear powers (although based on civilian nuclear programs provided by the U.S./Soviet Union) caused much debate about the U.S. and Soviet ability to control foreign development of nuclear weapon programs. In the 1960s, Washington and Moscow developed close cooperation focusing on the best way to reduce nuclear weapon proliferation.

The U.S. included two primary schools of thought regarding nuclear non-proliferation, closely paralleling the “manager” vs. “monopolist” concepts. Proponents of the Multi-Lateral Force (MLF) concept proposed barring all nuclear weapon technology transfers, but allies should be given (under the auspices of NATO) a limited use of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons assets. They believed that a “limited use” option would help deter independent nuclear weapon development for U.S. allies. The monopolist (and Soviet) view barred any transfer of nuclear weapon technology and transfer of control of any nuclear weapon. The U.S. and Soviet Union eventually agreed on a monopolist viewpoint, represented in the 1970 “Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”<sup>3</sup> (NPT).

“Any nonproliferation treaty would require support from both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and so the two countries entered into intense negotiations. The U.S.S.R vehemently opposed the MLF, because it was seen as a German route to the bomb. In the end, the U.S. had to make a choice: either the MLF or the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), and it chose the treaty. In 1968, the treaty was completed and opened for signature. It marked a turning point in the nuclear age, and an important milestone in U.S. and Soviet nonproliferation cooperation. With the NPT, both countries signaled that the core debate over nonproliferation policy had been settled, and that each country was committed to the same goal: preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Jim Walsh. “Russian and American Nonproliferation Policy: Success, Failure, and the Role of Cooperation” June 2004.

<sup>4</sup>“The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, also referred to as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), obligates the five acknowledged nuclear-weapon states (the United States, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, France, and China) not to transfer nuclear weapons, other nuclear explosive devices, or their technology to any non-nuclear-weapon state. Non-nuclear-weapon States Parties undertake not to acquire or produce nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. They are required also to accept safeguards to detect diversions of nuclear materials from peaceful activities, such as power generation, to the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This must be done in accordance with an individual safeguards agreement, concluded between each non-nuclear-weapon State

The NPT was a significant achievement in international diplomacy, and laid the foundation for a nuclear non-proliferation regime. The treaty came into effect on 5 March 1970 and has been signed by most nations with the notable exceptions of India, Pakistan, and Israel. North Korea has the distinction of being the only nation to sign and ratify the treaty, and to later revoke it after a dispute with U.N. weapons inspectors. In New York City, on 11 May 1995, more than 170 countries decided to extend the treaty indefinitely and without conditions.

Despite the overwhelming acceptance of the treaty in the international community, critics have pointed out the treaty had some serious limitations. These limitations include: granting too much leeway to convert a lawful civilian nuclear program into an illegal weapons program; ease of exiting the treaty; limited enforcement power; and no consequences for breaking terms of the treaty, except being reported to the U.N. Security Council.<sup>5</sup> Jon Wolfstahl, a prominent nuclear proliferation scholar, points out the implications of these deficiencies “The problem is that countries now interpret Article 4 to mean they can legally build civilian nuclear programs and acquire most of the knowledge needed to produce nuclear weapons. They can then renounce their treaty obligations and convert civilian programs to nuclear weapon production.”<sup>6</sup>

Loopholes in the NPT would become a major problem as the non-nuclear weapon regime attempted to draw the line between proliferators and lawful members of the treaty. Furthermore, the ability to threaten leaving the treaty would become a lever for non-nuclear weapon states in dealing with the non-nuclear weapon regime.

In general, the treaty was designed as a quantitative measure aimed at accounting for known quantities of materials and monitoring declared activities, instead of being a qualitative system aimed at gathering a comprehensive picture of a state's nuclear and nuclear-related activities.<sup>7</sup>

The NPT relieved concern about nuclear weapons development in most nations, but the treaty's inherent limitations could not reasonably guarantee compliance among unwilling nations. Often the U.S. and Soviet Union transcended NPT structures and continued bi-lateral negotiations in cases where compliance was in doubt. The U.S. approached nuclear proliferation from both the “supply” (controlled by limiting access to

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Party and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Under these agreements, all nuclear materials in peaceful civil facilities under the jurisdiction of the state must be declared to the IAEA, whose inspectors have routine access to the facilities for periodic monitoring and inspections. If information from routine inspections is not sufficient to fulfill its responsibilities, the IAEA may consult with the state regarding special inspections within or outside declared facilities.”

Federation of American Scientists, “Nuclear Non-Weapon Proliferation Treaty Provisions,” <<http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/npt/>> (19 March 2007)

<sup>5</sup>Council on Foreign Relations “Nonproliferation: Proliferation Threats,” <[http://www.cfr.org/background/nonpro\\_threats.php](http://www.cfr.org/background/nonpro_threats.php)> (19 March 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Arms Control Association, “The 1997 IAEA Additional Protocol At a Glance,” <<http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/IAEAProtocol.asp>> (19 March 2007).

materials and technology safeguards) and “demand”<sup>8</sup> (using political, military and economic levers as inducements for compliance) sides, while the Soviet Union primarily focused on supply-side measures.

### Has Russia Become a Proliferator? (1991-Present)

Throughout the Cold War, nuclear proliferation was one topic that the Soviet Union and the U.S. generally saw eye-to-eye. Both nations struggled to balance nonproliferation objectives with foreign policy issues, but generally nonproliferation objectives prevailed.<sup>9</sup> The desperate economic situation that Russia was thrust into after the collapse of the Soviet Union would change this situation. Foreign policy issues had been the traditional threats to the Soviet and U.S. non-proliferation objectives, but now financial considerations started to figure heavily into the equation for Russia. For the first time, Russia was forced to choose between financial solvency and national security. Russia’s decision about the balance between these two goals in conventional arms sales, would cast much doubt on Russia’s long-term nuclear non-proliferation commitment.

The Soviet Union had used conventional arms transfers as a means to acquire political and ideological influence.<sup>10</sup> Since its collapse, due to economic necessities, arms transfers have been used to generate hard currency for economic stabilization and revitalization.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the Soviets had typically exported only older equipment, but declining domestic demand has forced the free-market Russia to sell its latest equipment to maintain a military-industrial base.<sup>12</sup> Many experts believe Russia has been trading its current security for long-term force sustainment and modernization.

“The Ministry of Defense, as the designated agency responsible for preventing possible damage to national security as a result of export operations, faces a serious dilemma. By authorizing the export of sophisticated weapons that could be hypothetically turned against Russia, the ministry tends to choose the lesser evil. Despite opening up a channel for the spread of dangerous weapons and technologies, this option keeps afloat the

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<sup>8</sup> The U.S. used a combination of positive and negative assurances to influence demand. Typical positive assurances included; providing aid, lifting bans, energy support, conventional arms sales, while negative assurances include guarantees against attack.

Chaim Braun and Christopher F. Chyba, Proliferation Rings, *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004): 7-8.

<sup>9</sup> Although nonproliferation policies generally prevailed over foreign policy, there were exceptions. Especially notable are the cases of India and Iraq. Both the U.S. and the Soviet Union and turned a blind-eye to their activities due to foreign policy reasons.

Jim Walsh. “Russian and American Nonproliferation Policy: Success, Failure, and the Role of Cooperation” June 2004.

<sup>10</sup> “Recent publications indicate that [arms] transfers were of little commercial value and were used as an ideological/political tool. According to an official Russian source, in 1990 the USSR exported over \$16-billion-worth of weapons, out of which cash receipts totalled only \$ 900 million.”

Igor Khripunov, “The Politics and Economics of Russia’s Conventional Arms Transfers,” *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 132.

<sup>11</sup> Russian arms sales have been marked “by a stable growth tendency in defense-product sales, which have been increasingly steadily by approximately \$1 billion every year” Rosoboronexport chief Andrei Belyaninov. Conventional weapons are Russia’s no. 2 export behind oil and gas.

“Russia’s Arms Sales Pass \$5Bln Mark,” *Moscow Times*, 27 January 2004, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Aleksandr Kotelkin, “Russia and the Worlds Arms Market,” *International Affairs*, Moscow, no. 4 (1996): 16.

manufacturers that use the revenues, in the absence of adequate funding from the state budget, to modernize and produce weapons intended for induction in Russia's armed forces. Otherwise, by severely restricting such exports on national security grounds, the Ministry of Defense would undercut the defense industrial base and leave the armed forces with only a fraction of modern weapons so needed for their ongoing restructuring."<sup>13</sup>

The Russian view that proliferating conventional weapons helps the country attain long-term economic and security goals raises the question – would Moscow follow a similar path in the nuclear industry?

The Russians were already negotiating nuclear technology transfers with North Korea, Iran, and India, nations believed to be involved with clandestine nuclear weapon programs. Russian legislation easing nuclear export regulations further exacerbated concerns about Russia's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. complained that Russia was disseminating dangerous technologies to nations suspected of clandestine nuclear weapons development, and Russia responded by stating that all nuclear technology transactions fell within its treaty obligations.

Moscow's recent agreement to provide nuclear fuel to Iran is the latest U.S. allegation that the Russian Federation is proliferating nuclear weapon technology to nations suspected of covert nuclear weapon development.<sup>15</sup> Russia refutes this claim, stating that all transactions fall within the legal nuclear transfer clause under the NPT, and that the U.S. only arbitrarily raises the issue to punish certain nations and to corner the market on nuclear technology sales. Simply stated, Russia views itself as a facilitator of legitimate nuclear technology, while the U.S. views Russia as a proliferator.

Unfortunately, both Russia and the U.S. may be correct. The root of this disagreement lies with the NPT. The NPT prevents Russia from transferring technologies for the sole purpose of nuclear weapons development and demands safeguards for technologies that have civilian and military uses. There is little doubt that

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<sup>13</sup> Igor Khripunov, "The Politics and Economics of Russia's Conventional Arms Transfers," *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 141.

<sup>14</sup> "One can observe instances of the subordination of nonproliferation to economic considerations in Russian nuclear trade initiatives toward Iran, China and India. The latter case is particularly telling since it prompted Russia in 1996 to amend a domestic export control regulation that was at odds with the government's interpretation that the April 1992 Nuclear Suppliers Group guidelines were only applicable to contracts initiated after April 1992. The inconvenient regulation that might have legally precluded Russian Nuclear exports to India was Government Regulation No. 1005 (December 21, 1992), which specified that nuclear exports to non non-nuclear weapon states could only be made if all of the recipients country's nuclear activity were under IAEA safeguards. In contrast, Government Resolution No. 574 (May 8, 1996) conveniently amends Government Resolution No. 1005 and stipulates that so-called full-scope or comprehensive IAEA safeguards were only required under contracts before April 4, 1992. Under this grandfather clause, Russia has sought to argue that since an initial agreement to provide India with two VVER-1000 reactors was concluded in 1998, it was not subject to the 1992 full-scope safeguards requirement."

Elina Kirichenko and William C. Potter, "Nuclear Export Controls in Russia: The Players and the Process," *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States* (New York: Routledge 1999), 38-39.

<sup>15</sup> "Iran, Russia Sign Agreement for Delivery of Nuclear Fuel for Bushehr Plant," *Tehran Mehr News Agency*, 27 February 2005, <<http://www.mehrnews.com/en/>> (19 March 2007).

Russia generally complies with the NPT. The problem is the lack of full scope safeguards in the NPT, which allows a potential nuclear violator to acquire assistance in establishing a legitimate nuclear industry and using this knowledge as a basis for nuclear weapon technology development. If this is an accurate assessment of the proliferation risks of Russia's nuclear technology transfers, Russia may more accurately be described as an "enabler" as opposed to a "proliferator." While this appears to be an issue of semantics, it is at the heart of the U.S./Russian nuclear weapon nonproliferation debate.

#### Factors Attributing to Russia's Enabling

The causes of Russia's enabling can be attributed to several interrelated factors. The primary reason for Soviet/Russian enabling is economic gain; other factors also often serve as justifications for this economic gain. Additionally, all factors are influenced by another intangible variable -- institutional semi-autonomy. Russia cannot be viewed as a monolithic institution with one common set of goals. Although the central government is rarely defied, local governments and institutions within the system have historically subverted unfavorable laws, rules and regulations. This trend has continued to the present day and must be considered when evaluating Russia's enabling. Simply stated, in order to understand why Russia engages in questionable nuclear technology transfers, one must understand not only the central government's position, but which other groups stand to gain from these transfers.

***Economic.*** Predictions about Soviet/Russian dependence on nuclear technology transfers as a means for supporting the economy were made long before the collapse of the Soviet Union.

"In the past the Soviet Union has often criticized the Western supplier states for letting economic interests take precedence over considerations of nonproliferation. By expanding its international marketing of nuclear material and services, the Soviet Union may soon find it difficult to avoid similar economic considerations"<sup>16</sup>

Soviet technology transfers were initially motivated for political reasons, but later transfers to Argentina and Libya seemed to be primarily for economic gain.<sup>17</sup> The collapse of the Soviet/Russian economy led to a continuation of this trend.

The Soviet/Russian command economy was thrust into mayhem as it transitioned to a free-market economy. The crisis led to a slashing of the government budget, and as a consequence many industries had to look for new customers in order to remain solvent.<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Atomic Energy (MINATOM) was one of these agencies. The economic difficulties had ended most major domestic sales and severely cut subsidies on which the Ministry had depended. Although the Russian economy is doing much better now than in

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<sup>16</sup> William C. Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation," *Slavic Review* 44 (Fall 1985): 487

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* 477-486.

<sup>18</sup> "The Sukhoi Design Bureau's budget is largely dependent on its export performance- 70 percent comes from export revenues while only 30 percent come from state procurement orders (for each aircraft sold it receives 5 percent of its selling price). In 1997 all salaries to its personnel were paid from export revenues. As a result, the Sukhoi Bureau has developed a potential to export at least twice as much as it is currently exporting." Igor Khripunov, "The Politics and Economics of Russia's Conventional Arms Transfers," *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States* (New York: Routledge, 1999): 139.

did in the 1990's, the Russian nuclear industry is experiencing little benefit from this upsurge.<sup>19</sup> The government subsidies upon which MINATOM relied in Soviet times have showed no signs of reappearing, despite massive budget surpluses. This situation will likely force MINATOM to continue to seek foreign markets for sustainment and growth.

The Soviet/Russian nuclear industry would for the first time count on export sales to supplement its budget.<sup>20</sup> The transition from a command to free-market economy would begin to challenge Russia as she struggled to balance economic and proliferation concerns.

The desires of Soviet nuclear industry and the rest of the government could generally be considered one and the same. In this respect, the Soviet Union was considered a single actor regarding nuclear technology transfers. The economic difficulties of the Russian Federation had significantly altered the single actor model of the country in the non-proliferation regime. MINATOM began to independently pursue its own technology transfer policies, sometimes running in opposition to the policies of other ministries.<sup>21</sup> In addition, many state enterprises were taking advantage of the bureaucratic structure to circumvent export control legislation.<sup>22</sup> Russia could no longer be considered a unitary actor, it is an entity consisting of many different actors; with separate interests diverging and sometimes conflicting. This theme most often appeared with conflicting statements from MINATOM and the Ministry of Defense.<sup>23</sup> A conflict of bureaucracies and lack of centralized control contributed to a weakening of export controls from the Soviet to Russian regimes.<sup>24</sup>

The Soviet experience with nuclear technology sales has left MINATOM with a belief that if a potential "high-risk" nation wants to purchase nuclear technology,

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<sup>19</sup> Russia's economy is extremely reliant on its petroleum revenues, which accounted for 52% of its revenues in 2006.

"Russia Overtakes Saudi Arabia as World's Leading Oil Producer," Mosnews, 23 August 2006, <<http://www.mosnews.com/money/2006/08/23/russiaoil.shtml>> (22 March 2007)

<sup>20</sup> Valery Davydov, a Russian nuclear scientist working at the Russian-American Press, posits that MINATOM desperately needs the earnings it generates from its nuclear sales and that it attaches little importance to proliferation concerns.

Ali Javed, "Iranian-Russian Nuclear Trade," American University, <<http://www.american.edu/ted/irannuke.htm>> (19 March 2007).

<sup>21</sup> "Deputies Pleased With Kozyrev After Closed-Door Talks" Lukin Reviews Kozyrev's Responses on Iran," *Interfax*, 16 May 2005.

<sup>22</sup> Elina Kirichenko and William Potter "Nuclear Export Controls in Russia: The Players and the Process," *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States* (New York: Routledge, 1999) : 38-41.

<sup>23</sup> MINATOM has often denied that its nuclear transfers have aided covert nuclear weapon development. The Russian military has a slightly different attitude, and has voiced public concerns about the proliferation of potentially dangerous nuclear technologies in its periphery. Although the Russian military does have significantly more concerns than MINATOM, the Russian military believes that these build-ups would most likely be orientated at regional rivals and the U.S.

Victor Mizin, "The Russia-Iran Nuclear Connection and U.S. Policy Options," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (March, 2004): 71-85.

<sup>24</sup>Elina Kirichenko and William Potter "Nuclear Export Controls in Russia: The Players and the Process," *Dangerous Weapons, Desperate States* (New York: Routledge, 1999): 38.

someone will provide it. This was a costly lesson learned when Saddam Hussein approached the Soviet Union in the early 70's about the purchase of a high plutonium producing reactor. The Soviet Union refused the offer due to a belief this nuclear technology transfer was too high risk, and not consistent with the Soviet Union's nonproliferation commitments. Afterwards, the Soviets discovered that Iraq was being propositioned by competing salesmen from France, Italy, West Germany, and Canada that had no such qualms about supplying the identical technologies.<sup>25</sup> MINATOM likely believes it cannot afford another such scenario.

Russian nuclear technology transfers to Iran have long been a point of contention in U.S./Russian relations. The U.S.'s assumption about Iran's intent to build nuclear weapons has made this issue a top security concern. But U.S. pressure has often resulted in the loss of export revenue for the Russian Federation, without any compensation from the U.S.<sup>26</sup> The economic gains of nuclear technology sales are enormous for Russia.<sup>27</sup> The Iranian Bushehr project has already generated approximately 1 billion dollars spread between 20 government agencies, creating an estimated 20,000 jobs.<sup>28</sup>

**Political.** The dissemination of technology for political gain was the primary cause of early Soviet and U.S. nuclear technology transfers. The earliest instance of this approach was the U.S. "Atoms for Peace Program," which was used as a means of not only receiving assurances that recipient nations would not begin offensive nuclear programs, but also as a means for bolstering political support. The Soviet Union followed with a similar program in 1954, with transfers of nuclear technology to mostly Communist nations. The Soviets relied on influence, and not strict safeguards to insure nuclear weapon non-proliferation. This changed abruptly after Sino-Soviet relations soured and the Soviets realized that its nuclear technology transfers had significantly advanced the nuclear weapon program of a potential enemy. The fact that civilian nuclear programs could be turned in to offensive nuclear programs more easily than once thought, coupled with the understanding that Soviet influence was not a surefire way of preventing nuclear non-proliferation in allied states, led the Soviets to significantly tighten export controls and look to more multi-lateral control methods.<sup>29</sup> After the China

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<sup>25</sup> William C. Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation," *Slavic Review*, 44 (Fall 1985): 478.

<sup>26</sup> "Limiting Competition Is Said to Be the Real Reason for Imposing Sanctions on Russian Enterprises under Nonproliferation Treaty," *Izvestiya*, 4 December 2004. And Kirill Razumovskiy Iran i Ukraina Podruchilis Protiv Ameriki (Iran and Ukraine Are Friends Against America) *Kommersant*, 31 January 2001.

<sup>27</sup> "Russia's Nuclear Exports Exceed \$3.5 Billion in 2004," *ITAR-TASS*, 30 December 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Kucherenko, Vladimir. (Kak mnogo Zamyslov v Iranskom) *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* 12 March 2001

<sup>29</sup> "Significantly, The Soviet leaders failed to apply safeguards to any of these nuclear exports, perhaps because they were confident that they would be able to control the nuclear programs of their allies. Soviet laxness may also have been due to a failure to appreciate fully the ease with which these exports could be used for military purposes. This may explain the Soviet failure to insist on safeguards on nuclear exports during this period even to countries outside of the bloc, for example Egypt. The lack of Soviet attention in the mid-1950's to the issue of nuclear safeguards may also reflect the absence at the time of a coherent and consistent nonproliferation strategy. Precisely at the time when the Allied decision to encourage the

fiasco, The Soviet Union would continue to transfer nuclear enabling technologies, but the reasons for these transfers were increasingly more for economic than political reasons.

Alliance building, and countering U.S. hegemony, are often mentioned as major reasons for Russia providing enabling technologies to suspect nations. However, Russia perceives that the political gains of selling nuclear enabling technologies are far outweighed by the risks of nuclear weapon proliferation, and only the primary reason of economic benefit balances the equation. In short, politics are more of a justification than a reason for proliferating nuclear technologies in modern Russia.

**National pride.** U.S. demands have forced several concessions from the Russian government; these concessions have often hurt Russian national pride and caused resentment towards the U.S. This resentment is often heightened by the belief that the U.S. (or its allies) provides services that Russia is dissuaded from providing. This was the case when KEDO (Korean Energy Development Organization) provided North Korea with reactors of South Korean manufacture, undermining a previously signed deal with Russia.<sup>30</sup> Russia believes that a similar scenario could arise in Iran and Libya, nations that may soon reconcile their differences with the U.S. and the West. Russia was also upset when its sale of lucrative laser technologies to Iran was prevented, while the U.S. was simultaneously providing Israel with somewhat similar technology.<sup>31</sup>

The trampling of Russian pride by the U.S. has led to several perceptions about U.S. policy. Russia believes U.S. interference with its technology transfers are more means to enforce U.S. policy goals than insuring nuclear nonproliferation. There is also a strong belief that these policies also serve to separate Russia from those allies that the U.S. views as unfavorable.<sup>32</sup> In general, Russians believe that the U.S. would trample over their economic interests for the U.S.'s political benefit. These perceptions have led to recent surges in Russian nationalism and anti-Americanism. Putin's recent anti-U.S. comments reverberate well with nationalist sentiment that portrays any defiance of

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rearming of West Germany raised the issue of nonproliferation in Moscow to one of the first importance, the Soviet Union proceeded to provide China with substantial nuclear assistance.”

William C. Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation," *Slavic Review* 44 (Fall 1985): 469-471

<sup>30</sup> The Soviet-North Korean "Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation in the Construction of a Nuclear Power Plant in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" was already on hold due to a North Korea's defaulting on the Soviet/Russian credit line, but the new agreement eliminated any possibility that the original deal could be honored. It is also notable that Russia was not offered any of the lucrative contracts for the installation of the new reactors.

Kaurov, Georgiy "Technical History of Soviet-North Korean Relations" *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspectives from Russia*, 18-20.

<sup>31</sup> Natalya Xmelnik, "Arms Dealers Rub Hands," *Grani.ru* < [http://old.grani.ru/iran/articles/arms\\_laser/](http://old.grani.ru/iran/articles/arms_laser/) > 3 November 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Evgeniy P. Bazhanov, "Russian Views of the Agreed Framework and the Four-Party Talks," *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspective from Russia*, (New York: Routledge, 2000): 218-224.

American policy in a positive light.<sup>33</sup> The implications for Russia's nuclear export policies is that nationalistic fervor could increase the risk of spreading more enabling technologies.

***Technology transfers used to force compliance.*** The Soviet Union used technological transfers (supply-side measures) as the primary means for leveraging potential nuclear weapon proliferators into some type of safeguards program. Additional safeguards were a precondition for Soviet nuclear technology transfers in India, Libya, Cuba, and Argentina. Although these were not full-scope safeguards, they did increase the oversight capabilities of the nuclear weapon non-proliferation regime.<sup>34</sup> This trend has continued with the Russian Federation's dealings with Iran and North Korea. In both cases Russia has made increased safeguards, but not to full-scope standards, a precondition for nuclear technology transfers. In addition, Russia has asked for guarantees that these nations will not develop an independent nuclear fuel cycle, by returning spent fuels to Russia.<sup>35</sup> The transfer of nuclear technology as a means to bring about additional nuclear weapon non-proliferation safeguards is the strongest Russian justification for supplying potential proliferators with enabling technologies.

***Acknowledging the inevitable.*** The 2003 discovery of a covert nuclear technology transfer scheme involving Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Libya, and possibly others under the guidance of Pakistan's A.E Kahn led many in the nonproliferation studies community to reexamine the priority of risks in the nuclear weapon non-proliferation regime. The threat of nuclear proliferation has typically centered on first-tier nuclear powers; now the risk is increasingly coming from the second-tier, or developing world.<sup>36</sup> The main difference between the first and second tier proliferation is the motivating factors for the proliferators. Economic and political factors have typically motivated first-tier proliferators. Second-tier proliferators are characterized by exchanging their varying nuclear and conventional weapon capabilities to other second-tier proliferators in order to fulfill the needs of both countries. The Pakistani government's acknowledgement that sophisticated North Korean missile technology was traded for Pakistani nuclear centrifuges is an excellent example of second-tier proliferation.<sup>37</sup>

If this trend continues the current export control regime could become ineffective, as one author explains:

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<sup>33</sup>Shada Islam and Leon Mangasarian, "Putin's anti-US stance spurs fear of Cold War-style rift," *German Press Agency*, 10 February 2007, <<http://www.dpa.de/en/unternehmenswelt/index.html>> (20 March 2007).

<sup>34</sup> William C. Potter, "The Soviet Union and Nuclear Proliferation," *Slavic Review*, 44 (Fall 1985): 487

<sup>35</sup> Chain Braun and Christopher F. Chyba. "Proliferation Rings" *International Security*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004): p. 5-49

<sup>36</sup> "First-tier or primary proliferation may be defined as the spread of nuclear weapons-relevant material from states or private entities within states that are members of the formal nuclear exporters groups, the Nuclear Exporters Committee (or Zangger Committee) or the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Second-tier suppliers are other states or private entities within states that may be supplying nuclear weapons-relevant material on the international market." Chain Braun and Christopher F. Chyba, "Proliferation Rings" *International Security*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004): p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> "Pakistan: Khan Gave Nuke Material to Iran," *Associated Press*, 10 March 2005.

“The full development of such proliferation rings, unless checked, will ultimately render the current export control regimes moot, as developing countries create nuclear-weapons and delivery systems technologies and manufacturing bases of their own, increasingly disconnect from first-tier state or corporate suppliers, and trade among themselves for the capabilities that their individual programs lack. Along the way, technology transfer among the proliferating states will also cut the cost of and the period to acquisition of nuclear weapons and missile capabilities, as well as reduce the reaction time of the overall nonproliferation regime.”<sup>38</sup>

This inevitability of discovery may further justify Russia's economic reasons for proliferating certain technologies by reinforcing the perception that “if I don’t sell it, somebody else will.”

Second-tier proliferation concerns will not cause Russia to proliferate nuclear weapon technologies covered by the NPT, but it will cause Russia to be much more open to providing enabling nuclear technologies. This willingness to provide enabling technologies will stem from the belief that these technologies can be had with or without Russia’s assistance, and Russia can little afford to lose these much needed revenues.

***Perception of risk.*** The nuclear nonproliferation debate between Russia and the U.S. has led to the analysis of similar data sets, with very different conclusions. The threat assessments of Iran illustrate this point well. Vladimir Orlov, Director of the Center for Policy Studies in Russia (PIR), gives the general Russian view of the Iranian nuclear situation.

1. the program is at a very initial stage;
2. it lacks financial and intellectual resources;
3. it will not become successful without a massive outside support which is unlikely;
4. there is no political decision made in Tehran on "joining the nuclear club", and it is not clear whether it will ever be taken;
5. even if such a decision is taken, with its own resources Iran will need no less than eight years before its first nuclear test.<sup>39</sup>

These five points run contrary to current U.S. perceptions, and help illustrate that the same information can be interpreted much differently in Moscow than in Washington. Assumptions act as a prism when analyzing information. The construction of a nuclear facility can be seen as a benign activity or the beginnings of a nuclear weapon facility, depending on the prism from which it is viewed.

The United States has insisted that the possession of a nuclear weapon constitutes a major nuclear threat; Russia seems to have a slightly different attitude. This may stem from Russia’s threat analysis of weapon vs. weapon system. Although a nation’s capability to detonate a nuclear device poses a great concern to Russia, this concern is tempered by an overall view of a nation’s offensive nuclear capability. In comparison, the general American tendency is to hit the “panic button” whenever a nuclear weapon is mentioned. This difference in perspectives may be caused by Russia taking a more

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<sup>38</sup> Chain Braun and Christopher F. Chyba. “Proliferation Rings” *International Security*. Vol. 29, No. 2 (Fall 2004): p. 6.

<sup>39</sup>Vladimir A Orlov,. “The Future of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: A View from Russia” Prepared for the CEPS/IISS European Security Forum, Brussels, 3 March 2003.

qualitative view of nuclear weapons capability, placing greater weight on the assessment of the weapon system as a whole. The Russians view a fissionable device as the most important part of a nuclear weapon system, but without sufficient delivery means, triggering, and command and control, the threat of such a weapon system is placed at a much lower level than where the U.S. would place such a weapon system.

Russia and the United States perception of risk are further differentiated by the priority of national security threats. Both nations agree that terrorism is the primary concern, and there is little threat of direct military aggression. The nuclear threat is where priorities begin to diverge. The U.S. has been extremely concerned about the possibility of terrorist groups buying, stealing or independently developing nuclear weapons. Most Russian analysts view this concern as “alarmist,” and believe that there is little chance that a terrorist group could acquire a nuclear weapon. Russia believes the primary threat of nuclear attack comes not from a fissionable device, but from terrorists causing an incident at a civilian nuclear facility or using a radiological “dirty bomb.”<sup>40</sup> The most likely scenario for a nuclear detonation, as many Russian analysts believe, is an accidental or unauthorized launch of existing weapons.<sup>41</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the U.S.’s belief that the most probable cause of a nuclear detonation will be an attack perpetuated by a terrorist or nation.

The above mentioned perceptions of risk coupled with substantial economic gains help explain why Russia and the United States can have similar national security priorities, but have very different views on the risks of disseminating potentially dangerous technologies.

**Multilateral controls.** Another trend which has increased in Soviet/Russian nuclear non-proliferation strategy is the Russian desire to pursue multilateral controls instead of the Soviet preference for unilateral controls. This tendency can be seen in Russia’s recent foreign policy and public statements.<sup>42</sup> There are several reasons for the acceleration of this change in non-proliferation strategies. The main reason is that Russia’s decline from superpower status does not give it the sufficient political and economic influence needed for unilateral control measures. In order for Russia to further its goals, it must work with other nations to leverage concessions. Russia’s transition from unilateral to multilateral controls might prove to be a valuable lesson for the non-proliferation regime as the “carrots” and “sticks” of unilateral players are increasingly marginalized by a growing third world markets and military capabilities.<sup>43</sup> Another reason for Russia’s shying away from unilateral control policies is the way that these control methods can be more easily manipulated. North Korea’s playing of one power

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<sup>40</sup> Orlov, Timerbaev, Khlopov, *Nuclear Nonproliferation in U.S.-Russian Relations: Challenges and Opportunities*. (Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 2002), 51-52.

<sup>41</sup> An Agenda for Renewal U.S.-Russian Relation- A Report by the Russian and Eurasian Program of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC, 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Alla, Kassianova, “Russian Diplomacy in the 21st Century Multilateralism Put to Work” PONARS Policy Memo No. 262, Tomsk State University October 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel Griswold, “Going Alone on Economic Sanctions Hurts U.S. More than Foes,” *Center for Trade Policy Studies*, 27 November 2000 <<http://www.freetrade.org/pubs/articles/dg-11-27-00.html>> (19 March 2007)

against another in its negotiations with Russia, the U.S., China, South Korea, and Japan is a prime example.<sup>44</sup>

In a more general sense, multilateral controls also provide Russia a means to counter U.S. hegemony.

Although disapproving of US actions towards Iraq, Russia has shown that she is unable to prevent the US from using force. Her anxiety to make known her continued desire to cooperate with the USA underlines her impotence in the face of US military and economic power. Igor Ivanov has talked about how the Iraq crisis demonstrates the need for the international community to develop an effective international security system, and for the UN to be reformed. However, he appears to have no clear idea of how to achieve these objectives. These sentiments seem more to reflect Russia's wish to prevent the USA from using force unilaterally, but having no means to see this wish fulfilled. The most that Russia is able to do in this regard is to increase her level of diplomatic cooperation with France, Germany and China, and talk about the need for a multipolar international system. As in the case of Kosovo in 1999, Russia has little choice other than to accept the outcome of US actions, and to continue to cooperate with Washington. Russia's concern about being excluded from the post-war reconstruction of Iraq, and Putin's recommendation that the Duma ratify the SORT Treaty (it was ratified in May 2003) make clear Moscow's awareness that it sees no alternative to cooperation with the USA.<sup>45</sup>

Russia believes that when U.S. and Russian interests conflict, Russia usually loses. In order to put Russia on a more equal footing with the U.S., Moscow has been adopting more multilateral control methods. Russia uses its position and influence in multilateral organizations to oppose unwelcome U.S. actions. Russia's "rule by consensus approach" can thereby delegitimize U.S. unilateral actions.<sup>46</sup> This relates to Russia's non-proliferation policies as Moscow encounters resistance from the U.S. regarding its nuclear technology transfers, as Russia cannot afford a serious breach of relations with the U.S.

"For us, relations with the United States are of exceptional importance, and what is happening now - the Iraq crisis, the UN Security Council, the differences in the positions of a number of members of the council - we do not believe that these differences will prevent us from continuing to develop our relations."  
Our countries have too many common interests in the world. We now have to actively engage in implementing the agreements on reducing [nuclear] offensive potentials, we have Afghanistan, we have the Middle East ... as concerns the Iraq crisis, here too, if you noticed, Russia has always stressed that it is trying to find a common language, with the

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<sup>44</sup>Alexandre Mansourov, "North Korea's Negotiations with the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization," *The North Korean Nuclear Program: Security, Strategy, and New Perspective from Russia*, (New York: Routledge, 2000): 218-224.

<sup>45</sup>Mark Smith, "The Axis of Evil: The Russian Approach," *Conflict Studies Research Centre*, (July 2003): 3.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.* 5

USA, with Britain, and with the other countries which support a different point of view. We have never been supporters of artificially whipping up confrontation and polemics; the situation is now too serious to engage in polemics.<sup>47</sup>

The multi-lateral regime is one strategy for allowing Russia to pursue strategies that displease the U.S., while not cutting the flow of needed benefits or causing damaging sanctions. The legitimacy of consensus provided by the multilateral control regime can be used by Russia to counter U.S. demands. If Russia can establish that its nuclear technology transfers are legitimate in the world's eyes, the U.S. will have a much more difficult time leveraging Moscow to conform to its policies.

#### The Russian Solution

Throughout the Cold War nuclear proliferation policies was one area that the Soviet Union and the U.S. generally saw eye-to-eye, but Russia's decline has brought a change to its nuclear proliferation policies. The Soviet methods of bilateral political and technological export controls would be impractical with Russia's decreased influence and currency starved economy. Russia needed to find a way to sell nuclear technology and be reasonably confident of non-proliferation. In Moscow's view, the solution relies on the NPT and a multilateral control regime. The Kremlin believes that its use of both these tools will satisfy the supply and demand sides of the nuclear weapons proliferation equation and reduce the need to scrutinize the sale of "enabling" technologies. This strategy is already evident in Moscow's approach toward Iran and North Korea regarding nuclear technology sales. Although remote, there still is a chance that this strategy will allow a nation to renege on its promises, defy international pressure, and begin pursuing an offensive nuclear program. However, Russia's options are limited, and it appears there is little else that it can do to satisfy both its economic and proliferation goals.

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<sup>47</sup> Deputy FM Fedotov says Iraq crisis will not damage Russia's ties with US, Moscow *NTV Mir* in Russian, 9 March 2003, as translated by the *Open Source Center*, CEP20030309000018, <<http://www.opensource.gov>> (20 March 2007).